

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows.

Please amend the abstract as show below:

Abstract

The present ~~disclosure invention~~ provides methods for modulating the cholesterol level of a cell. In some aspects, methods relate to contacting a cell with one or more cholesterol-modulating compounds, thereby increasing or decreasing the cholesterol level of the cell. ~~a screening method for identifying test agents that modulate cell membrane cholesterol activity. The modulating activity of the test agents may be measured using lytic compounds, which cause cell lysis or increases in cell permeability in response to cell membrane cholesterol levels. The invention further provides therapeutic agents that are identified using the screening method. The therapeutic agents either increase or decrease the cell membrane cholesterol activity, cholesterol concentration and/or both in vivo and/or in vitro.~~